



Questioned Documents Section – 2011

J16 SWGDOC – Where We've Been, Where We Are, and Where We're Going

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the history, accomplishments, and future of SWGDOC.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating attendees about the direction of this Scientific Working Group.

SWGDOC began in 1997 as TWGDOC (Technical Working Group for Forensic Document Examination), was renamed SWGDOC in 1999, and was reorganized in 2001 to its current form of operation.

SWGDOC is composed of the chairperson and numerous government and private forensic document examiners from throughout the United States. The government examiners are from federal, state, and county laboratories.

The mission of SWGDOC is to assemble representatives from the forensic document examination community in order to: (1) define the scope and practice areas of the profession; (2) standardize operating procedures, protocols, and terminology; (3) consolidate and enhance the profession of forensic document examination; and, (4) promote self-regulation, documentation, training, continuing education, and research in the area of forensic document examination.

The field of questioned documents was one of the first to receive repeated challenges in court by a group of law school professors who claimed to be "experts on experts." As a result, the discipline was motivated to begin writing and publishing sub-discipline specific operating procedures for use during questioned document examinations (e.g., handwriting, typewriting, indentations, etc.). It was determined that SWGDOC would publish through ASTM International, as draft documents are reviewed by practitioners in many different forensic disciplines through that organization.

SWGDOC operates using sub-groups with a population of generally five to seven individuals. These sub-groups draft or update operating procedures for specific sub-disciplines within the forensic document expertise. These drafts are vetted through the other sub-groups and then submitted to ASTM International (a consensus-based standards publishing organization) for balloting and eventual publication. SWGDOC has either written and/or updated eighteen standards published through ASTM International. There are also fifteen additional draft standards that have been prepared for balloting.

SWGDOC's current goals are to: (1) strengthen the content and the enforcement of published performance standards; (2) continue to write and foster the publication of performance standards for sub-discipline examinations; (3) publish and maintain the *Daubert Factors for Attorneys and Daubert Factors for Forensic Document Examiners* presentations (as they relate to forensic document examination); (4) participate in and support a Human Factors Working Group for Forensic Document Examination; and, (5) expand the participant pool to include academicians, statisticians, legal professionals, and practitioners from other forensic disciplines.

SWG, Scientific Working Group, Questioned Documents